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Retired Intelligence Officers Alarmed by Soviet Spying in U.S.

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When FBI and Army experts came to the Washington suburbs Friday to talk to the Association of Former Intelligence Officers about Soviet spying in the United States they found an audience often more alarmed than the speakers.

The meeting at Springfield, Va., attended by about 400, was the eighth annual convention of the association, whose membership includes more than 3,000 retired officials, agents and other employees of intelligence agencies ranging from the CIA to the military services and the super-secret National Security Agency.

These annual sessions provide rare opportunities for shop talk among "old boys" who spent careers in anonymous pursuits that could not be discussed openly, much of it aimed at combatting what they see as a Soviet menace to America operating on many levels.

The session on "Soviet Penetration of the United States" focused on Soviet efforts to steal, buy or borrow American science and technology. The problem is a major target of the Reagan administration and is increasingly acknowledged throughout government, industry and academia.

Some of the participants' questions, however, reflected even deeper concern about the Soviet threat.

"Is there any Soviet involvement in the communist control of Santa Monica," asked one. Santa Monica's council is controlled by the Campaign for Economic Democracy, headed by former antiwar activist Tom Hayden.

"I wouldn't say Santa Monica is under communist control," answered panelist Edward J. O'Malley, assistant director and chief of counterintelligence operations of the FBI.

A woman who identified herself as a member of the League of Women Voters complained about speakers whose views were influenced by the Institute for Policy Studies, a liberal, Washington-based think tank.

When she protested, to applause from the audience, that "something should be done to open the eyes of the league," retired Adm. William C. Mott, the panel moderator, and Major Gen. William E. Odom, chief of intelligence for the Army, both suggested the league should find other speakers to balance the institute's viewpoint.

When another woman asked about educating the broadcast media so that Soviet officials like Georgi Arbatov, a Soviet expert on U.S. affairs, would not be given access to American television programs such as NBC's

"Meet the Press," O'Malley replied that it is "generally known" who Arbatov is and that "this is a free country." Arbatov last appeared on CBS's "Face the Nation."

A man who said he had served with the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked what could be done to stop leaks to the media of what he described as highly sensitive and top secret information. O'Malley said leaks by "certain elements" in the government are a serious problem that give a "tremendous assist to the other side."

But he added that the FBI finds "case after case—in which we have been assured that this was very secret, very sensitive" material to which "very few" people had access—that actually "200, 300, 400 people had access that we know of." He said some people in government don't want to cooperate with an investigation or tell the press about the investigation.

Another questioner, referring to the FBI's program to alert business to Soviet efforts to steal technology, asked why the FBI had not briefed the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or other "extremely liberal professors who deal with technology and who are pushovers, if not worse." O'Malley said the FBI had briefed some academic institutions, but others were not receptive. O'Malley earlier told the group that the Soviets have given top priority to collection in this country of military and scientific information, particularly about computer technology. Much of the material is collected openly, he said, but the Soviets also try to penetrate U.S. government and industry and recruit agents from among the 60,000 Soviet emigres who have arrived in the United States in the last three years.

He said a lot of damage is done by American citizens who provide secret information. Sometimes the motive is revenge for being passed over for promotion, or coercion or blackmail. But mostly, O'Malley said, the motive is money. "The KGB manual says Americans can be bought. Unfortunately, this is true," he added.

O'Malley said there are slightly more than 1,000 Soviet diplomats and officials assigned to the United States, about 35 percent of whom have intelligence assignments. Moscow is also making greater use here, he said, of surrogates from both eastern and western European countries in an effort to "put distance between themselves" and espionage.

But what O'Malley said "concerns us most of all" is East-West scientific exchanges in which he argued "the

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